ABSTRACT

The present invention provides a method, system, and computer program product for defining calendar events for users of electronic calendaring systems and using those calendar events to customize information pertaining to the user. A multi-level hierarchy of calendar events is defined, where a top level of the hierarchy is used for context events which have a relatively long duration and a lower level of the hierarchy is used for specific events which occur during context events. The calendar user may specify attribute values for attributes of context events and/or specific events, such as how the user can be reached when that event is active; whether, and how often, the user checks his e-mail or voice mail when that event is active; etc. Attribute values are hierarchically coalesced, with specific event attribute value taking precedence over the values of corresponding context attributes. Overrides may be provided for the context and specific event values as well, enabling a user to fine-tune his preferences. Use of the present invention enables other persons trying to contact a calendar owner to be informed of the calendar owner's status for the applicable date and time, as well as information such as when the calendar owner will next be available or how he can be reached in the interim, without requiring the calendar owner to manually change configuration settings of his e-mail or greetings of his voice mail, etc. The techniques disclosed herein are also applicable to other scenarios such as instant messaging and project management.